

## Cavalcade of Counties:

# THE GENIUS OF JERSEY

*Diversity Is the Word for the Garden State, a  
Land of Contrasts from High Point to Cape May*

BY JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

**Y**OU watch the moon cut a silver path across Lake Hopatcong or you climb Sunrise Mountain in Stokes State Forest to look at sun-bathed Kittatinny Valley. You watch cattle picking at grass on rocky slopes in Northwest Jersey or you stop to see a maple tree tapped for syrup at Newfoundland.

... and a vaudeville comedian can get a laugh by mentioning that he's from "Joisey."

You wake up in a Bridgeton hotel on a beautiful August morning, and the delightfully aromatic smell of spices seeping through the window tells you forcibly that it's catchup time again in South Jersey.

... and all over America people think New Jersey smells like the Secaucus meadows.

The wind whistles through stunted trees as you shuffle in the sands beneath old Barnegat Lighthouse, and dark clouds scudding overhead foretell an impending October seaside storm, one of nature's most impelling spectacles.

... and millions of people think the Jersey shore is just a long boardwalk or acres of burning skin.

You look at dozens of 200-year-old houses in old Salem or you see the charm of the old churches at Tennant, Shrewsbury and Middletown. You sit on the fishing docks along the canals in Sea Isle City or you watch the oyster fleet come in at Bivalve.

... and wonder why all roads lead to New England.

Climbing a fire tower in Lebanon State Forest to look out over hundreds

of square miles of almost unbroken pine lands, you contrast this vast wilderness with the view off Eagle Rock, where the eye encompasses the most densely settled section of America.

... and you're glad you know New Jersey.

**I**F this be provincialism, make the most of it—bearing in mind, of course, that to become provincial about one's own back yard means giving up spending time and money and energy running around looking at other people's better-advertised provincialism.

Familiarity with New Jersey breeds respect, too, because here there is diversity; here there is contrast. There are windmills by the Millstone River, factories by the Passaic; rugged grandeur in the Palisades, handsome hills in Somerset; vegetables in the fields of South Jersey; railroad patterns in Hudson; chickens on Hunterdon's hill-sides and Miss America in Atlantic City.

Truly New Jersey is a paradox; its location astride the main transportation routes of the East has made it both tremendously vital and relatively unadmired. The rising sun throws New York's shadow over the state, the setting sun bathes Jersey in the shadow of Philadelphia. Caught between these two great cities, New Jersey has been largely thought of as a path—or, as Benjamin Franklin said, "like a barrel tapped at both ends."

But beside that Philadelphia-New York path there is intriguing vari-

*Seldom has a series of articles presented by The Newark News received such a warm response from its readers as the "Cavalcade of Counties" in which the history, achievements and modern life of New Jersey's 21 counties were sketched by John T. Cunningham. The News is now happy to announce that plans are underway by Rutgers University Press to publish the articles in book form early next Fall. Some expansion and revision will be made in the text which has appeared in The Sunday News magazine since last October 5.*

In New Jersey, there's intriguing variance off the beaten path . . .





ance, so much that it makes knowing New Jersey difficult. Statistics can prepare the way to knowing the state, although they can't reveal the charm—any more than a tape measure can reflect Miss America's personality.

**J**ERSEY is petite, every one knows—45th in size in the country—and, in fact, so small that if all states were the size of New Jersey, the American flag would have 370 rather than 48 stars. Yet within this small space are living 4,800,000 people, most of whom are so jammed in the "city belt" between Hudson County and Camden that 84 per cent of the state's acreage is still either farmland or forestland.

A Garden State? Well, yes and no.

Yes—to the extent that its 25,000 farms have an annual gross income of close to \$400,000,000 and a national standing of first in volume of farm income per acre. No—to the extent that New Jersey's industries rank sixth in value of manufactured goods, ranging from silk to petroleum.

All work and no play? Hardly. The lakelands in North Jersey and the famed beaches in South Jersey add up to an annual multi-billion dollar enterprise, ranked third in the nation.

But statistics do not necessarily engender pride or deepen a heritage. Those require the focusing of attention on the home lot, on the 21 counties which comprise New Jersey. The reward far transcends mere provincialism, because in New Jersey are found all the elements which have combined to change a new world into the United States in less than three centuries.

*Take the matter of people . . .*

**T**HE Dutch, Swedes and Finns first settled New Jersey, but they found no difficulty in living with their English conquerors. Dutch, Swedes, Finns, English, Irish, Scotch, in turn, found room for Germans who came early in the 18th Century to farm the fields of Hunterdon or to work in Salem County glass works or in Passaic County iron mines.

Later, in the 19th Century, masses of Irish who fled the potato famine came to build the state's railroads. Germans who fled political persecution came to breathe freely in New Jersey. New Jersey found room for Italians who came at Civil War time to help create Vineland and Hammononton in the South Jersey pines.

Then, as immigrant ships brought the hopeful from all lands in the 1880s and 1890s, the growing industries of New Jersey absorbed them. The Hungarians, the Poles, the Swiss, the Russians, the French, the Czecho-Slovaks, the Lithuanians and the Scandinavians came to add their virtues to the melting pot. Jersey's three centuries of growth have lent meaning to the words on the State of Liberty:

"Give me you tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to  
breathe free . . ."

*Take the matter of geography . . .*

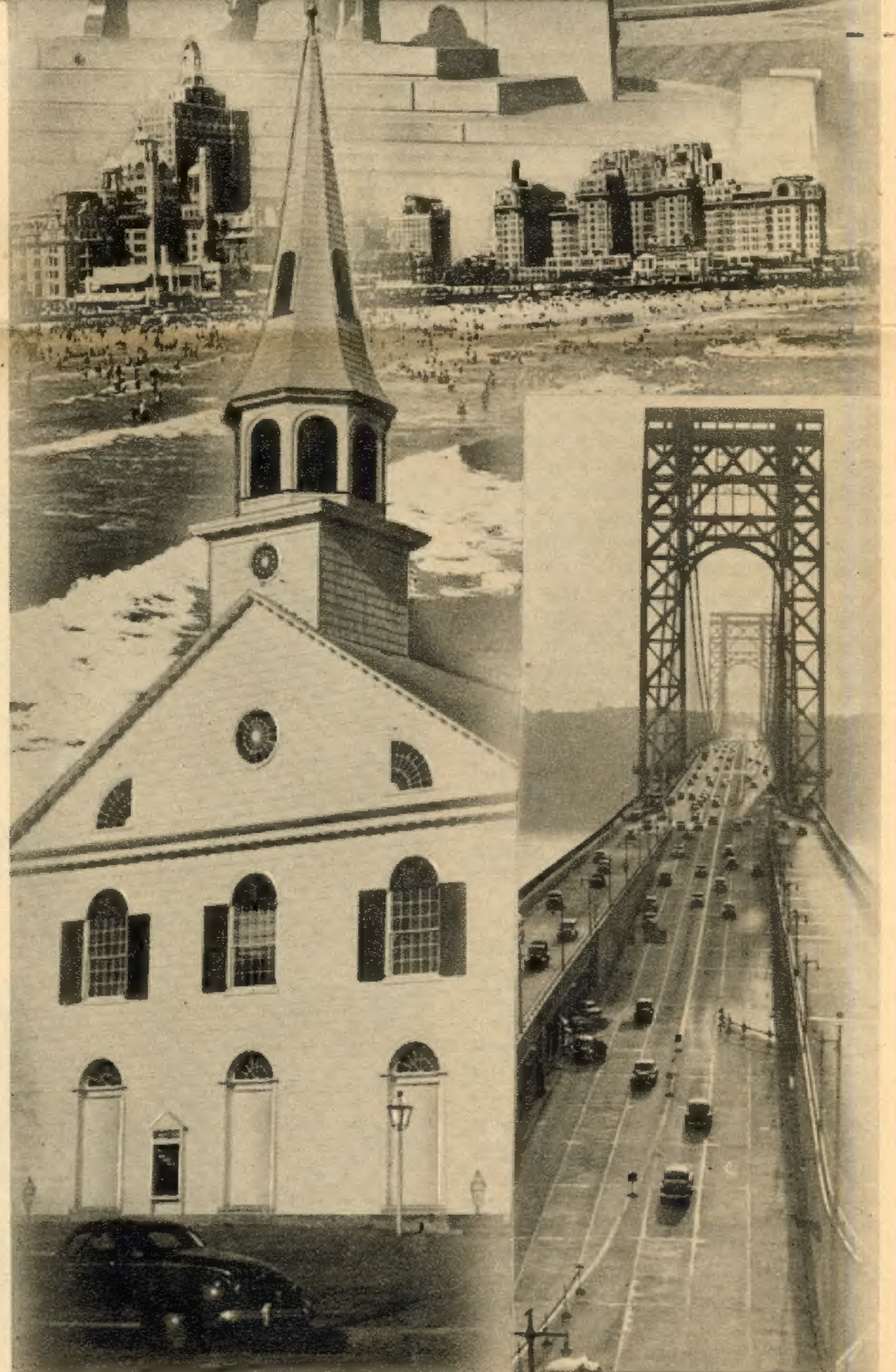
**N**ATURE has split the state into three varied areas: The mountain country, the central hill and valley country and the coastal plains of South Jersey. As people touched geography, nature took a hand.

In the mountain country, rich iron mines—plus fast-running streams and unlimited forests—attracted the iron makers to Morris, Passaic, Warren, Sussex and Hunterdon. Farmers broke the hilly ground and struggled for a living, until they found that dairy cattle brought dividends greater than anything which could be grown in the fields. Estates of the wealthy clustered on the mountains, and when railroads came, the North Jersey commuter was born. Today the cattle and iron and homemakers have been joined by the vacationists who know and love the lakes in the Highlands.

Nevertheless, the most vital portion of New Jersey is the central strip—that corridor linking New York and Philadelphia.

This is the "city belt," and, with the exception of Atlantic City, every major city in the state is in this cor-

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. . . in the mountainland, the hill-valley country and coastal plains.



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ridor. This is the heart of New Jersey industry, the homeland of the commuting population whose very life revolves about New York and Philadelphia. Over this corridor stretch the busiest highways and railroads in the world, linked at either end with docks and piers which give and take in world markets.

"City belt" it is indeed, but as might be expected in a strip where most of the state's people live, there is also great emphasis on culture and education. These revolve much of the time around the schools of higher education in the central strip—Princeton, Rutgers, Drew and Seton Hall universities, Upsala, Panzer, Bloomfield, St. Elizabeth's, Fairleigh-Dickinson, St. Peter's and Rider colleges, Stevens Institute, Newark College of Engineering and Montclair, Jersey City, Paterson, Newark and Trenton teachers colleges. The only four-year colleges not in the "city belt" are Georgian Court in Lakewood and the College of South Jersey (now affiliated with Rutgers).

**F**INALLY there is Southern New Jersey, itself a study of sharp divergence. This is South Jersey. A thin strip of land running from Cape May to Sandy Hook, where surf and sand combine to make a seaside playground for the nation; a vast area of pines and scrub oak trees, where mere man has met only frustration and economic collapse; a wide belt of verdant, prolific soil spread in an arc around the western edge of the pines.

Atlantic City, still less than 100 years old, is probably the nation's best-known vacation resort. Cape May and Long Branch had national fame by Civil War time, while Asbury Park has grown rapidly since its founding right after the Civil War. The Jersey shore is known to countless millions of people, most of whom don't have the slightest interest in anything else in the Garden State.

If New Jersey deserves the name Garden State, incidentally, it's largely because of the rich strip of soil which starts in Monmouth County and circles down through the lower parts of Middlesex and Mercer counties, through the western part of Burlington and on into Camden, Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland counties. Most of the state's potatoes, tomatoes, vegetables and fruits are grown in this garden strip and the state's major food processing plants are here.

**S**OUTH JERSEY has more, much more, than seaside resorts and farmlands. It has chickens, with Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic and Cumberland counties (plus Hunterdon in North Jersey) accounting for nearly all the state's huge annual \$133 million income from poultry. It has glassworks, in Salem and Cumberland counties (and can boast that the industry goes back to 1738). It has the thriving and picturesque oyster fleet in Cumberland County and the important commercial fisheries all along the coast. It has the rapidly expanding industrial region strung all along the Delaware River below Trenton.

Take the matter of history . . .

There is the story of New Jersey's

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leading role in the Revolution—admittedly because troops constantly marched and counter-marched across the state to attack or to defend the vital ports of New York and Philadelphia. Gen. Washington and his armies spent more than one-quarter of the war on Jersey soil. Four major battles and nearly 100 minor engagements took place between the Hudson and the Delaware.

**T**HREE times Washington took to the New Jersey hills for Winter headquarters, twice in Morristown and once in Middlebrook. South Jersey food and North Jersey iron supplied the troops constantly. Bloody footprints in the snow and starvation in wretched quarters were as much a mark of Jockey Hollow as Valley Forge. Jersey's "Summer soldiers," "sushine patriots" and outright Tories contrasted with Jersey's minutemen and seashore privateers.

*But at the nation grew, it divided, and New Jersey was caught in the middle . . .*

The Quakers of South Jersey long had opposed slavery, with Mount Holly's John Woolman a vigorous advocate of emancipation in the 18th Century. Warren County's Benjamin Lundy won recognition early in the

19th Century as the leader of the Abolitionists. Slavery-haters strung out from Salem to Hoboken helped fleeing Negroes escape their pursuers.

However, the boot and shoe makers of Newark and the snuff makers of Middlesex County opposed the war, fearing loss of their Southern markets. One quarter of the state lay below the imaginary Mason-Dixon line, including Cape May, where Southern aristocrats long had gathered. Half of Princeton University's student body came from the South.

But Copperhead sentiment couldn't eclipse the fact that the North's first volunteers came from New Jersey's Warren County, or that Cumberland County supplied a greater number of volunteers in proportion to its size than any other county in the north. New Jersey did its share, particularly after war contracts proved to be every bit as lucrative as the lost Southern trade.

*Then industry edged into the Garden State . . .*

**R**AILROADS reached almost every part of New Jersey by 1870 and by 1900 the state had the greatest concentration of railroad track in the

country. The Hudson County waterfront grew from mudflats to busy piers. Factories arose beside the tracks—in Jersey City, Hoboken, Bayonne, Harrison, Kearny, Newark, Elizabeth, New Brunswick and on down to Trenton and Camden.

Iron mines in the Morris hills and zinc mines in Sussex prospered. Phillipsburg grew from hamlet to city. Paterson stopped building locomotives and made silk. Trenton found pottery and iron combined to make a stable economy. Camden's star rose on soup, shipbuilding, steel pens and victrolas.

The movie industry started and grew in New Jersey, beginning in Thomas A. Edison's laboratory and spreading to the Palisades, where the earliest movie companies filmed thrillers at Fort Lee. Edison gave the world the electric light, the talking machine. Everywhere Jersey was abustle, always in the stream of industrial progress—often far ahead of the current.

*But the cabbage patches expanded, too . . .*

**S**TRIKINGLY enough, New Jersey didn't move from rural to urban status until the census of 1880, when 54 per cent of the population was adjudged urban. That same census also saw New Jersey's population top the 1,000,000 mark for the first time. Yet, in 1900, when the population soared to 1,883,669 (70 per cent urban) farms also reached a new high in number—34,650.

Since then, farm acreage has been cut nearly in half but farm output has soared spectacularly as the farmers moved well out in front of the nation's agriculturists in increasing the rate of milk production per cow, egg production per hen and yield per acre for many crops.

The state's most spectacular increase has been in egg production, which in the last 25 years alone has increased 316 per cent. Dairy farmers have moved ahead remarkably, too, increasing milk production almost 60 per cent since 1925. Seabrook Farms in Cumberland County has helped stimulate a big jump in vegetable production for quick freezing. Potatoes, tomatoes, string beans, asparagus, celery, onions, peas, cabbage, all continue to be important Jersey crops.

*People have to sleep . . .*

**A**S soon as the railroads rolled over the mountains to Morristown, down the plains to Somerville and across the meadows to Paterson and Hackensack, people started to move out into the country. Still, it took the automobile to accelerate the move (and, to make it possible for New Jersey to absorb the 3,000,000 new residents who have arrived since 1900).

Nowhere has the increase been more startling than in once-bucolic Bergen County, where the population has rocketed from 78,441 in 1900 to more than 550,000 today. The George Washington Bridge had much to do with the increase, but the fact is that Bergen grew 75 per cent in population between 1900 and 1910, another 53 per cent from 1910 and 1920 and still another 73 per cent from 1920 to 1930. Such increases as those in Bergen—



Trenton's tribute to Washington en route to New York inauguration.





and in Morris, Essex, Union, Passaic and Somerset—have added to North Jersey's reputation as a "dormitory for New York." Similar population increases in Camden, Burlington and Gloucester counties have made a similar "dormitory" for Philadelphia.

So, New Jersey has variety, even if it escapes most people (and in a way you can't blame people, who must also judge a state by headlines from Bergen and Atlantic and Hudson counties). But, putting the headlines aside, one way to grasp the Jersey variety is to contrast and compare the component parts, the 21 counties of the state.

Compare Atlantic County's recreation industry and small year-around population with the teeming population and heavy industry of Bergen. Put Burlington's farmlands and pine-lands against Camden's growth in the shadow of Philadelphia, then contrast both of them with the quietude of old Cape May, where it is said there are more descendants of Mayflower passengers than there are in Plymouth.

Take tidewater Cumberland, with its oysters, glass, chickens and frozen foods, and contrast it with Essex, where factories, department stores, insurance houses and economic importance mingle with the pleasant homes in the Orange Mountains. They differ, but nothing like the difference between old Gloucester, the "Garden Patch of Philadelphia" and Hudson, the railroad and dockside center of the state. Hunterdon, 70 per cent rural, has a farm atmosphere radically different from Gloucester's—and Hunterdon's pleasant hills are somewhat more attractive than Hudson's waterfront (in most opinions, at least).

THE "M" counties—Middlesex, Mercer, Monmouth and Morris—might well be called the "heritage" counties, because within them are found a major portion of the state's Revolutionary War importance. The "M's" include Princeton and Rutgers universities, and Middlesex and Mercer combine to make up the tiny 32-mile waist-

line across the state's center. Much of New Jersey's history has been shaped along this waistline, of course, because of its transportation vitality. The iron of Morris helped influence New Jersey manufacture, the marl beds of Monmouth influenced state-wide agriculture. The state capital at Trenton has made Mercer a logical center, while Middlesex has always been a transportation key.

Salem's lush fields and quiet dignity compare favorably with both the estate country in the Somerset hills and the dairy farms on the rocky Sussex mountain slopes. Through these three counties can be glimpsed a picture of Jersey's differing topography—ranging from the flat swampy Salem lowlands where muskrats live, through hills leveling into valleys in Somerset and on up to Jersey's highest spot in Sussex County.

FINALLY, place Union's heavy industry and convenient commuting towns against Warren's beautiful hill scenery, where only Phillipsburg has to right to claim itself industrial. Lest any one think that Warren has all the scenery to the disadvantage of Union, however, let him drive through Watchung Reservation.

Somehow New Jersey escapes the words which praise it (and, fortunately, the words which damn it). That's because New Jersey is more than people, more than geography, more than history, more than industry, more than agriculture.

Jersey is a flotilla of sailboats on a North Jersey lake, a picnic in a state forest. It's the old streets of Cape May. The newness of the New Jersey Turnpike. It's the red and gold touched on North Jersey maple leaves in the Fall, the magic of Atlantic City in July. It's the George Washington Bridge and the wooden covered bridge at Columbia.

Jersey is old, Jersey is new. She struggles to be all things to all men, and both fails and succeeds. She lives in the shadow of cities, yet basks in the sunlight of farms. She's a paradox, is Jersey.

But she's worth any man's while.



The Garden State is also a corridor state for North-South travel.